DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 314 318 SO 020 418

AUTHOR de Varona, Frank
TITLE Hispanics Must Be Included in Our Textbooks.
PUB DATE 11 May 89
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the National Association of Bilingual Administrators Conference (Miami, FL, May 11, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Historical Materials (060) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Hispanic Americans; *History Textbooks; *Improvement; *Textbook Bias; *Textbook Content; *United States History
IDENTIFIERS Aviles (Pedro Menendez de); Farragut (David Glasgow); Galvez (Bernardo de)

ABSTRACT

Entire generations of U.S. historians have ignored the role of Hispanics in U.S. history. Yet Hispanics have played major roles from the time of the Revolutionary War to the present. General Bernardo de Galvez, the Spanish governor of the Louisiana Territory during the American Revolution, sent supplies to the rebel armies. When Spain entered the war against Great Britain in 1779, he raised an army in New Orleans and drove the British out of the Mississippi Valley and later out of the Gulf of Mexico. Other Spanish naval and military campaigns contributed to the final victory against Great Britain. Most history textbooks mention David Glasgow Farragut, the Union naval hero of the Civil War, but none mentions that he was of Hispanic origin. The Anglo settlers of the United States clashed with and defeated Hispanics in the Southeast and Southwest, which could explain the exclusion of Hispanics from textbooks. One does not highlight the significant achievements of the enemy or discuss the enemy's contribution to the exploration and settlement of the country. It is time that an effort is made to include the contributions of Hispanics to the nation's history. To deny any group knowledge of its contributions diminishes its sense of self-worth. The lack of information about minority group achievement contributes to the development of myths and stereotypes and erodes the image of the minority in the eyes of the public. Appended to the document is a statement on the development of bias-free textbooks and teaching materials. (JB)

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by
Frank de Varona, Associate Superintendent
Dade County Public Schools, Miami, Florida
National Association of Bilingual Administrators
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In September 1983, I was invited, along with twenty-three other Hispanic educators from across the nation, to participate in a White House conference. One of the participants at the meeting was Dr. Lauro Cavazos, who at the time was president of Texas Tech University. He is now, of course, the Secretary of Education, who has been asked to stay on during the Bush Administration. Dr. Cavazos is the first Hispanic cabinet member in the history of our nation. We met with the President, Dr. Terrell Bell, Secretary of Education, and other officials discussed educational issues involving Hispanics. At the end of the meeting, each person was given a Presidential Proclamation acknowledging National Hispanic Heritage Week, 1983.

Reading the Proclamation as I was flying back to Miami, I was surprised to find the name of a Hispanic general who had fought bravely during the War of Independence. President Ronald Reagan had written the following in the proclamation:

> Through the years, Hispanic American citizens have risen to the call of duty in defense of liberty and freedom. Their bravery is well-known and has been demonstrated time and again, dating back to the aid rendered by General Bernardo de Gálvez during the American Revolution.

Bernardo de Gálvez? Who was he? What had he done? How was it possible that I had never heard his name before? I have been teaching United States History for many years, and I consider myself knowledgeable in United States and Latin American history. Perhaps I had come across General Gálvez's name and had forgotten it. I searched through all the current American history textbooks that were being used in the Dade County Public Schools in Miami, only to find that General Gálvez was not mentioned in a single book.

As a matter of fact, these textbooks of over 700 pages explain, in one short sentence, that Spain declared war on England in 1779, but give no other information. Puzzled by this finding, I went to the University of Miami Library, which is famous for its Latin American collection. I finally found what I was looking for: a few biographies on General Gálvez, an account of his military campaigns, and even a diary that General Gálvez kept of his most important action, the Battle of Pensacola.

My research revealed that Bernardo de Galvez was the Spanish governor of the Louisiana Territory during the American Revolution, a territory that encompassed thirteen of our present states. General Gálvez started to send gunpowder, rifles, bullets, blankets, medicine and other supplies to the armies of General George Washington and General George Rogers Clark. Once Spain entered the war against Great Britain in 1779, this dashing young officer raised an army in New Orleans and drove the British out of the Mississippi Valley and later out of the Gulf of Mexico. General Gálvez captured five British forts in the Lower Mississippi Valley and took over 1,000 British prisoners. Later his lieutenants fought in the Upper Mississippi Valley. They repulsed a British and Indian attack in St. Louis, Missouri and captured a British fort at Lake Michigan. With reinforcements from Cuba, Mexico and Puerto Rico, General Gálvez captured Mobile and then Pensacola, the capital of the British colony of West Florida. At Pensacola, Gálvez commanded a multinational army of over 7,000 soldiers. The city was defended by a British and Indian army of 2,500 soldiers and British warships.

The Siege of Pensacola has been called by an American historian "a decisive factor in the outcome of the Revolution and one of the most brilliantly executed battles of the war." This battle ended in May, 1781, just five months before the last battle of the war at Yorktown. The Battle of Pensacola is the only battle of the American Revolution about which a contemporary account was written by the commanding officer. General Gálvez's Diario (Diary) is a remarkable day-by-day account of this important battle. Another historian stated that General Gálvez's campaign broke the British army's will to fight.

Other Spanish naval and military campaigns in Central America and in Europe, the capture of the Bahamas by Cuban-born General Juan Manuel de Cagigal, and the tremendous financial assistance given by Spain, Mexico, and Cuba to the thirteen colonies contributed to the final victory against Great Britain. It is doubtful that without the strong support of Spain, France, and, to a lesser extent, the Netherlands that the thirteen colonies could have defeated Great Britain, the strongest power in Europe, at that time.

It is an outrage that United States history textbooks do not mention the important role played by our "forgotten allies," Spain and Hispanic America, during the American Revolution. This "conspiracy of silence" and major historical omission must end. The millions of Hispanics in the United States today have a right to know, as does the non-Hispanic population, that Hispanics fought and died in many battles during the American Revolution and that they also contributed to the establishment and growth of the first democracy in the modern world.

Indeed, President Reagan had been absolutely right in remembering General Gálvez's deeds, since in no historical period is information on the Hispanic contribution more neglected than during the

American Revolution. As a Hispanic, and a history teacher, I am upset at the injustice done to Hispanics in the history textbooks.

The exclusion from textbooks and other documentary materials in the United States of the part played by Hispanics in the War for Independence has led me to find out about and publicize their continuing presence and achievements in this country. I want to set the record straight.

As I researched about Hispanics in the United States I found that the neglect in reporting Hispanic contributions is widespread, and extends to all periods of American history. I also discovered that five historians working for People for the American Way, a respected nonprofit organization in the social studies, published a report in 1986 called Looking at History: A Review of Major U. S. History Textbooks. Thirty-one current history textbooks were analyzed in great detail by the historians, who concluded:

> Overall the treatment of Hispanics ... perpetuates their invisible roles in building this nation. Hispanics, whose ancestors were the first European settlers within this nation's current boundaries, have long been ignored or casually mentioned in conventional U.S. history textbooks ... By the end of this century, Hispanics will constitute the largest minority group in the nation and their valuable contributions to our country's history must be included in school textbooks (Davis, 1986, p. 10).

Entire generations of American historians have excluded Hispanics from the nation's history. Perhaps our earliest historians inherited the traditional British dislike for Spaniards. After all, both nations fought each other for centuries. It is as if the Black Legend propagated by Great Britain to discredit Spain at the peak of her glory in the sixteenth century persists to the present. Also contributing to the neglect of Hispanics was the 1893 "frontier hypothesis" developed by Fredrick Jackson Turner and accepted by many historians. Turner and his followers described the history of our nation beginning at Jamestown and Plymouth. According to them, the Anglo-American pioneers settled along the Atlantic Coast and then moved westward over the Appalachian Mountains, across the Great Plains to California and Oregon. The Anglo-British were joined by other Europeans, such as the Germans.

However, the British civilization remained, except as it was modified by the American frontier. Turner invented the frontier explanation, observing the situation in his native Wisconsin. However, by emphasizing this east to west historical viewpoint and excluding all others, the truth was distorted.

It is true that the most important population stream was Anglo, and that it laid the foundation of the nation. But, there were other

important migrations to the nation. One came from Canada. French Canadians moved southward along the Mississippi River to Louisiana and started fur-trading operations. Later, Spaniards controlled the Louisiana territory for a period of almost forty years.
A second population stream originated in the Caribbean Islands. Spaniards, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans moved north into Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia. The third migration came from Mexico. Spaniards and Mexicans moved north into Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and California.

Eventually, the westward-moving Anglo-Americans clashed with the Spanish frontier, as they had earlier with the French. Anglos, with a handful of Mexican allies from Texas, fought the Mexican Republic, and later the entire nation went to war against Mexico. The Anglo victory in the Southwest, as well as the earlier victory in the Southeast against Hispanics, accounts for the exclusion of Hispanics from the textbooks.

It is a truism that victors write the history and in the case of the Hispanics, they lost the contest for the North American continent. The fact that the nation fought four times during the nineteenth century against Hispanic countries explains why the strong Spanish heritage from our nation's beginnings was kept silent. One does not highlight the significant achievements of the enemy, and particularly, one does not discuss the enemy's contributions to the exploration and settlement of the country.

It also explains why few people know our first "Founding Father," Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. In 1987, I addressed a meeting of the Council of State Social Studies Specialists (CS4), whose members included consultants and supervisors in social studies in the various state departments of Education at the National Council for the Social Studies Conference in Dallas, Texas. I asked them the following question: "How many of you have heard the name Pedro Menéndez de Avilés?" Not one supervisor had heard it. Not one! Then, I proceeded to discuss the deeds of the first founding father, sent by King Philip II of Spain to drive the French out of Florida.

Pedro Menéndez de Avilés was one of the best admirals in Europe. He had taken Prince Phillip on his ship to London to marry Queen Mary of Tudor. He had participated in many European wars and had commanded the Fleet of the Indies, the convoy of Spanish galleons that brought the gold and silver to Spain for many years. Later, King Phillip II of Spain sent Aviles to drive out the French, who had built a fort in Florida and posed a threat to the Fleet of the Indies. Avilés quickly drove the French out and later established a permanent Hispanic presence in Florida. But more than a great seaman and military leader, Avilés was a builder and a missionary. As governor of La Florida, he founded St. Augustine in 1565--the first permanent settlement. He also founded six other settlements in Florida and South Carolina and founded the first missions in Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia. How could it be that a man who ruled the Southeastern part of our nation for almost

a decade is virtually unknown?

Most history textbooks mention David Glasgow Farragut, the Union hero of the Civil War, who captured New Orleans, Vicksburg, Port Hudson, and Mobile, and split the Confederacy in two with his naval victories along the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Farragut became the first person awarded the rank of Admiral of the Navy and a worldwide hero. Yet, not one textbook mentions the fact that he was of Hispanic origin. Thus, we are denying Hispanics a badly needed hero and role model. Textbooks also do not discuss the role of the 10,000 Hispanic soldiers who fought on both sides of this conflict.

Jorge Ferragut (the name was later anglicized), David Farragut's father, was born in Ciudadela, Minorca in Spain. He fought in the South Carolina navy and the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He attained the rank of major of the cavalry at the end of the war. Incidentally, I graduated from Admiral Farragut Academy. For three years, I studied naval science and history, wore a patch with his name on my shirt, saw his portrait at school every day, and for the last two years wore a graduation ring with his name and face engraved on it. Nevertheless, it was not until my recent research that I learned about Farragut's ancestry.

Just as the civil rights and feminist movements forced historians and publishing houses to revise the textbooks to include the previously neglected contributions of Blacks and women, a new effort must now begin to include the Hispanic contributions to the nation's history. A small group of educators in Miami began this national effort by preparing a resolution to that effect, which was endorsed by the Dade County and Florida Councils for the Social Studies. This resolution was presented before the House of Delegates of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) during its annual convention in New York City, held in November 1986.

As you are well aware, the National Council for the Social Studies has approximately 26,000 members, comprised of social studies teachers, college professors, and social studies supervisors. The resolution was approved overwhelmingly. I am grateful to the National Council for the Social Studies for the opportunity given to my colleagues and me to address audiences at the last three annual conferences on this issue. Most particularly, I would like to thank former National Council for the Social Studies president, Dr. Jan Tucker, current president, Dr. Donald Schneider, and Executive Director, Fran Haley.

The resolution on Hispanics has since attracted the attention of some publishing companies. I co-authored two textbooks entitled Hispanics in American History, Volume 1 and Volume 2, published by Globe Book Company. To my knowledge, these are the first textbooks written in chronological order about the role of Hispanics in the United States history for students in school. I was hired by Globe as a consultant to update its two current American History text-

books and to review a collection of short biographies of famous Hispanics entitled Hispanic Biographies.

I was also hired by Raintree Publishing Company as a senior consultant to assist with its Raintree Hispanic Stories. The company is publishing eight books on famous Hispanics, and will add more books to the series in the future. I am certain that as we approach the 500th Anniversary of the first voyage of Christopher Columbus to the Western Hemisphere, other publishing houses will "discover" Hispanics. I am also certain that most publishing houses will do a better job of including significant Hispanic contributions when they update their current history textbooks in the future.

Encouraged by the adoption of the resolution by National Council for the Social Studies in New York City, I decided to edit a textbook for teachers of American History and to make it a Dade County Public Schools project. I then recruited a team of writers from diverse backgrounds and experience to conduct major historical research in order to rescue the deeds of Hispanics from oblivion from 1492 to the present.

The final product will be a book or books, edited by me, which will consist of over 50 articles. Many individuals, PTA's, and corporations have donated funds toward this project. As of November 1988, almost $30,000 has been raised. Fifty to sixty thousand dollars will be needed to publish 5,000 books for distribution, free of charge, to teachers and administrators across the nation. The book will be given to all publishers of American History textbooks in an effort to persuade them to include the significant contributions of Hispanics. This project has received official recognition by the United States Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commission.

The New York State Department of Education is leading a major international curriculum project called the Ibero-American Heritage Curriculum Project, which will have a lasting impact on the nation. In commemoration of the quincentennial of the voyage of Columbus to the Americas, the New York State Education Department, in conjunction with six nations (Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Portugal, and Spain), six states (Arizona, California, Florida, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas), and Puerto Rico, is developing a series of resource guides entitled: Latinos in the Making of the United States of America: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. I was invited by Maria Ramirez, Executive Director, to join the project's International Advisory Panel and to write a paper on Cubans in the United States.

The Ibero-American Project states in its introduction:

> To better understand the peoples of the United States, one must understand the rich diversity of those who created and developed this society. Most Americans have some knowledge of our

> anglo-rooted history, but the Spanish-rooted conquests, explorations, and settlements in the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries also have had significant effects on the heritage of the United States. The Spanish contributions and gradual transformation of society are as important as the English colonial development in the Northeast, and should be studied. Each one of these four centuries will be explored in terms of the historical transformation of social elements such as politics, economics, demographics, religion, education, language, and culture.

The project, in a position paper, calls for a reconceptualization of United States history. It states:

> The British part of United States history is well known. From Jamestown to Plymouth Rock, from the Revolutionary War to the influence of the English legal system in our own Constitution, from the use of English to other deeply-rooted customs related to our British ancestors, United States history reverberates with our Anglo antecedents. Yet, our Spanish legacy, even longer and just as deep, is missing in our history books and consequently in our national consciousness ... The Ibero-American heritage project is fundamentally important in having all of us, Latino and non-Latino, re-think and re-learn about our Latino roots. It is a different conceptualization of United States history, a more complete version which will fill in unexplained gaps in the textbooks which our your people read.

All of these efforts--the Ibero-American project, the Dade County project, the new books on Hispanics recently published--are very important. Hispanics comprise the fastest growing segment of the population--there are more than twenty million Hispanics living in the nation today. They must know that their ancestors have made significant contributions to the growth of the nation. To deny any group knowledge of its contributions diminishes its sense of self-worth.

The lack of information about minority group achievement in the population at large contributes to the development of myths and stereotypes. It also erodes the image of the minority in the eyes of the public. Only when all ethnic groups are respected for what they have contributed to the nation will the American dream come true.

National Hispanic Heritage Week, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

National Hispanic Heritage Week pays tribute to a rich part of America's cultural tradition, offering all Americans a welcome opportunity to recognize the qualities and contributions of Hispanic Americans from earliest colonial times to the present. The dedication to principles of loyalty, patriotism, strong religious faith and devotion to family displayed by Hispanic Americans is basic to the American way of life.

Hispanic Americans have played an important role in the development of our rich cultural heritage and every State has benefitted from their influence. They have distinguished themselves in the arts and sciences, education, industry, government and many other areas of productive endeavor. Indeed, they are a part of all that makes America great.

Just as their forefathers sought a dream in the New World, Hispanic Americans have realized their dreams in our great Nation and will continue to do so. Their dedication to higher purposes reflects what is best in the American spirit.

Through the years, Hispanic American citizens have risen to the call of duty in defense of liberty and freedom. Their bravery is well-known and has been demonstrated time and again, dating back to the aid rendered by General Bernardo de Galvez during the American Revolution.

In recognition of the many achievements of the Hispanic American Community, the Congress, by joint resolution approved September 17, 1968 (82 Stat. 848), authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating the week which includes September 15 and 16 as National Hispanic Heritage Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning September 11, 1983, as National Hispanic Heritage Week in honor of the Hispanic peoples who have enriched our daily lives, our traditions and our national strength. In this spirit, I ask all of our citizens to reflect on the sense of brotherhood that binds us together as one people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 25th day of Aug., in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan